

## The Bloomsday Centenary, 2004: Leopold Bloom and Ireland's Reasonable Accommodation Debate

The 100th anniversary of Bloomsday, on which James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* is set, was commemorated in Dublin on June 16th, 2004, with a large street theatre performance that featured members of the city's immigrant communities who were cast to celebrate an ideal of Irish cultural diversity.

Yet just 5 days before the Bloomsday Centenary, on June 11th, 2004, the vast majority of the Irish electorate had voted in a referendum to rescind the rights of children born to immigrants in Ireland of their entitlement to Irish citizenship.

This talk will examine James Joyce's legacy in relation to recent debates about Irish citizenship, immigration and nationality in which his works are implicated. It will consider the ways in which both cultural theorists and immigrants have invoked Leopold Bloom as a positive role model for an emerging Irish multicultural sense of identity against the backdrop of increasingly restrictive definitions of Irish nationality. The talk will also propose a new reading of *Ulysses* that regards Bloom not simply as an excluded outsider, but as a well integrated member of a minority community whose social interactions provide numerous examples of the accommodation of cultural difference.